BROADWAY JONES

FROM THE PLAY OF GEORGE M. COHAN

BY EDWARD MARSHALL

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS FROM SCENES IN THE PLAY

CHAPTER I.

Back of the massed red-brick and clapboard buildings forming, in Jonesville, Conn., the extensive group devoted to the manufacture of Jones' Pepsin Gum, was the abandoned power house, wherein were housed the water-wheels which once had furnished force to drive the factory's machinery. The stream's diminishing flow, the increased needs of the business, and the economy of steam all had militated toward industrial abandonment of the old building.

Small boys never fished there, for the sluice-waters were too swift, loafers never idled there, for the watchmen of the mills were too strict in their guardianship; but lovers sometimes wandered there, of moonlight nights; and in the afternoons, when the academy sessions had ended, "Broadway," really named Jackson Jones, but nicknamed "Broadway" because of his continual glorification of New York's great thoroughfare, which he had seen upon occasion, sometimes went there "to get away from Jonesville." This afternoon he was to teach two Jonesville girl friends new dance steps which he had learned in New York city. Later, dancing these with him at the Odd Fellows ball, they would confound all other girls in Jonesville.

The girls came promptly. Clara Spotswood was the daughter of the local judge, Josie Richards the daughter of a recent manager of the gum factory. Her father was now laid up with rheumatism, and Josie was in training for a bookkeeper's post in the great enterprise which swallowed most of Jonesville's youth of either sex, as soon as they left school.

"Now this step, girls," Broadway said in preface, "was invented on Broadway for use upon Broadway by Broadway people. Don't mistake it for a quiet nap. It's not a sleep-dance. It was not dreamed out in Jonesville."

"And was everybody dancing it?" asked Josie.

"Every girl I saw," he answered. He had been telling of a ball he had attended in New York, but not quite all he might have told about it. "Everyone I saw, but one."

"And was she dancing old style?"

"No; she was being carried to an ambulance. She had just sprained an ankle."

"Oh, Jackson, you're too funny!"

"Thanks for those kind words." He watched them whirl together for a moment. "No; not quite that way, Clara. Don't give a Broadway step a Jonesville twist; you want to give a Jonesville step a Broadway polish."

Breathless they stopped their efforts. "Oh, you and your Broadway! You're always talking about Broadway!"

"Clara," said Jackson very seriously, "have you ever seen Broadway?"

"You know I haven't."

"Well, if you had, you'd never see another place you thought worth seeing."

"Oh, you and your Broadway!" Josie Richards was an extremely pretty girl, more serious than Clara, who was fluffy. "No wonder the boys all call you 'Broadway!'"

"I suppose a minister is proud when people call him 'doctor,'" was the answer. "When people call me 'Broadway,' I feel about like that."

"I'd rather folks would call me Andrew—Jackson," remarked Sammy. "Andrew—Jackson—was a—statesman—not—a—street."

"Your—er—little brother," began Broadway, but, not being eloquent by nature, he left the sentence incomplete.

"He thinks he'll be a Caesar. He wants to kill some boys by strategy, for he's too fat to fight."

The girls laughed again. Now they had begun the pleasant homeward walk along the high road to the border of the village.

"Can you come to supper?" Clara asked.

"As long as I can't eat on Broadway I'd rather go to your house than to any other place I know," said Jackson. "But I've got to go home first. This collar's wilted."

He was the only boy in Jonesville who would have thought of that; he was the only boy in Jonesville who owned a pair of patent-leather shoes.

As they passed his uncle's residence the old man, who was his guardian, caught a glimpse of him through an opening in the neglected shrubbery on the great lawn, and sent a serving man to bid him enter.

Jackson made a wry face for the benefit of the girls, as he said good-by to them, promising to appear for supper at the Spotswoods'. He carefully obeyed the summons, but it irked him. His uncle always irked him. He believed, and there were others who believed, that his uncle tried to irk him. They never had got on very well together; the old man was hard, conservative to the point of stubbornness and opposed every young idea, particularly to every young idea which chanced to have originated in his nephew's brain.

"Well, Jackson," said his uncle sourly.

"Well, Uncle Abner."

"Ready to settle down in Jonesville, are you?"

"Now, uncle," said the youth protestingly.

"Your father settled down here, I settled down here, and you'll have to settle down here," said the grim, unlovable old man. "You have obligations here. The Jones Gum factory has built this town, and is responsible for it. You will have charge of the factory before long."

Jackson writhed. He didn't wish to have charge of the factory.

"It's not good business, uncle," he had once told the man who now sat staring at him moodily. "They'll think it was the gum that made him bald. Poor grandfather was too bareheaded to be a good advertisement for anything, except—an Indian."

"Why an Indian?" his uncle inquired without suspicion.

"As an after-taking 'ad' of the best scalper in the tribe."

This irreverence had abruptly ended that day's interview.

But this evening Abner Jones was busy with more serious thoughts.

"When are you going to work?" he crabbedly demanded.

"I don't see—"

"Jackson, every Jones for two generations has learned the gum business before he was as old as you; but you, foolishly indulged by your father—I have never seen such madness as the way he brought you up—have come to manhood knowing nothing of it. Don't you ever wish to settle down?"

"Not yet," said Jackson, boldly. "I'm too young."

"You're twenty-one."

"I'm twenty-one; but I've lived most of the time in Jonesville. That makes me just fifteen so far as actual age goes—and yet the time seems longer than it is," said the irreverent Jackson.

"I'm almost discouraged. I'm free to tell you, Jackson, that, if your father's will had left me any opportunity for doing so, I should see to it that, when I pass to my reward, you would have no share of the great business which you hold in such contempt."

"Pass on to your—er—yes, sir," Jackson murmured.

"I have had tales brought to me of some things you have said about Jonesville," said the old man bitterly. "You have compared it most unfavorably with that modern Babylon, New York."

"Well—er—uncle, you know New York is—well, more metropolitan."

"Jonesville is metropolitan enough. Jonesville is a pleasant little town, built by the industry and brains of the members of your family, sir—in both of which you seem to be most singularly lacking; and, while it has fewer people than New York, it has more virtues. You will be the only Jones remaining after I have gone. I am far from well. I—"

Instantly the young man was contrite. He had no wish to hurt his uncle's feelings.

"I'm sorry, sir, if you are feeling ill," he said, respectfully, "but, you see, you've always lived in Jonesville—a great drain on a man's vitality. I didn't mean to say a word to bother you."

But the old man was not to be pacified; his face continued stern. "It is less your words than what seems to be your disposition which annoys me," he burst forth. "Is there nothing serious in you?"

"I guess I'm pretty young to settle down. Perhaps that's what's the matter."

"I had settled down and had complete charge of the bookkeeping department of this great enterprise before I was eighteen. You might begin to take life seriously."

"You can't take it any other way in Jonesville."

"I feel that I should tell you various details of the business, for my days here may be numbered."

The youth looked deprecatingly around the dull old library, feeling, in the earnestness of his revolt, that if his own days in Jonesville were but numbered it would give him great relief. Even death, he thought—

"I'm sorry you're not well, sir."

"We are but shadows cast upon the stream of life. Mere shadows, Jackson."

Jackson gazed at him with careful eyes; that his mouth was also careful was entirely proven by the fact that it said nothing. A careless mouth might have remarked that his old uncle was a pretty solid shadow, for he weighed close upon two hundred pounds.

"Your father," said this very robust invalid, "had some tendencies which I now see in you—exaggerated in you, Jackson. He, too, was frivolous; he, too, longed for the flesh-pots of New York."

"I never did, sir," he said, gravely.

"I wish I might feel sure of that," said Abner Jones. "I should feel surer of the safety of the gum."

"I shall never harm the gum, sir."

"You must not only never harm it; you must help it. Let me tell you, Jackson—there is a trust in the gum business—"

"Yes, sir, I've heard of it."

It would have been remarkable if he had not. For two years the air of Jonesville had been full of timid rumors of the gum trust. The whole town was fearful that the great Jones factory might be sold to it and closed.

"After I am gone they will endeavor to secure our factory and business," Abner Jones went on. "I shall never let them have it. You must never let them have it. Of your pride in the Jones gum—"

"It's surely been a handsome little money maker," Broadway granted.

"I do not like your language," said his uncle, "but the meaning of your words is accurate enough. It has made money. It still continues to make money—as an independent gum. It—"

Broadway was getting fidgetty. The Spotswoods were waiting supper for him. Mrs. Spotswood was a plump and cheerful housewife, who doted on the recipes he brought back from New York upon the rare occasions when his uncle let him go there.

"It would make more, uncle, wouldn't it, if it lost its independence?" he inquired.

"The plan of the trust is to take it from the market. They have not thought of continuing it as an individual product. They merely wish to eliminate it utterly. This would free their other products of its competition."

"Did some one of them chew it?" his nephew inquired earnestly.

"Jackson, you should be ashamed! They merely wish to take it from the market so that it no longer will affect their—"

"Yes, I've heard." He had—a thousand times.

"That is the reason I am anxious that you should begin to show some vital interest in our splendid enterprise. It must be protected at all hazards. It should be the pride, as it has been the fortune, of the Jones family."

"Honest, uncle, I don't believe I know enough to go into the business. Aren't you afraid that it would spoil the sale of the gum if anybody should find out I helped to make it? That worries me. The gum must be protected. I leave it to you, uncle. I—"

"Jackson, you are frivolous. You are a tremendous disappointment to me. You—"

"I don't want to be a disappointment, but I'd almost rather be a disappointment than a gum-maker. I'd—"

"Go!" said his uncle angrily. "I—"

But Jackson did not hear the remainder of the sentence. He had heeded its first word.

CHAPTER II.

"I should enjoy the supper better," Broadway said later at the Spotswood family table, "if everything I chew, after I've seen uncle, didn't make me think of gum. I wish there was a way of eating without chewing."

They all laughed, but not very heartily. Gum was a sacred word to them also. It was to every one in Jonesville.

"Let's talk things over after supper," said the judge. Then, after they had gone into his stuffy little study: "Broadway, I've been talking with your uncle."

"That's one reason I would never study law. You have to do such disagreeable things. I've been talking with him, too."

The judge laughed very briefly, very dryly. "It's not politic for you to speak that way, my boy. The old—er—your Uncle Abner will be sure to hear of it."

"Must I pretend to love him?"

"Er—It might be better to."

"Judge," said Broadway solemnly, "I'm a pretty good little amateur actor, but there are some parts I'd never try to play. One of them is that of loving nephew to my Uncle Abner Jones."

Judge Spotswood sighed. "I know, my boy, and I don't know that I blame you. I only wished to say that as a matter of expediency—"

"I don't know just what expediency means, but if it has anything to do with Uncle Abner I don't want to."

"Well, he said today that he hadn't any hopes of you. He said he didn't think you'd ever settle down. He doesn't seem to know where you get all your wild ways from. He is shocked beyond expression to find that your young friends all call you Broadway. It's worrying your uncle."

"What will he propose?"

"If you won't go into the business, he will try to buy you out."

Jackson looked at him in dumb delight. "For money? Ready money?"

"Yes: it's what I'm afraid of, Jackson. Be careful how you sell to him."

"I'll be careful that he pays me. That's all I care about."

"Don't be in a hurry. What I'm afraid of—but I ought not to talk in this way. Abner Jones has never done me an ill turn. Of course your father was my client—"

"And dear uncle put his hooks into my dad whenever he could get them caught so's he could pull, didn't he?"

"He is a shrewd business man. But don't sell, Jackson." The judge was clearly ill at ease.

"If I don't sell, will I have to turn to and make gum?"

"You ought to. A goose that lays a golden egg should be well cared for."

"Let uncle raise the poultry. I'd rather sell the eggs."

"But, Jackson—"

"Judge, will you come to see me in New York?"

The conversation had brought Jackson Jones to sudden realization of the fact that in eleven months or less he would be twenty-two, and that, as soon as he was twenty-two, he would be free, according to the terms of his dead father's will, to spend his own exactly as he pleased.

"I suppose you'll go there just as soon as you are master of your fortune."

The boy leaned forward eagerly. "When will it happen, judge? Will it be on the midnight that begins my birthday, or the midnight that it ends with? Quick! I've got to know."

"Better wait till the next day, Jackson. That's the safest. Oh, I know you'll go! But don't sell to your uncle. Promise me."

"When will he make me the offer?"

"Before your birthday, Jackson."

"Is it as close as that? Is liberty as close as that? I hadn't realized! Couldn't we get him to talk to me tonight about it? If I agreed to sell to him for half, would he agree to let my birthday come at once instead of when it's scheduled? Would—"

The judge was laughing, somewhat ruefully. Jackson Jones amused him, always; to some extent he could sympathize with his revolt against Jonesville. He himself had revolted against Jonesville in his youth, but there had been no fortune coming to him with the arrival of his manhood to release him from the hated village. And, besides, he was uncomfortable tonight. He wondered if he ought to tell Broadway what he had learned.

"Will you consider me your lawyer?" the judge asked.

(To be Continued)

VISIT "DOC" COPELAND

W. A. Mitchell, chief electrician, and L. T. Carson, assistant chief engineer, of the Great Western Sugar company, which owns and operates most of the beet sugar factories in this section of the country, were in the city today visiting "Doc" Copeland, The Herald's sporting editor. The two men are on a trip of inspection of the different plants. They go from Alliance to Billings, Montana, where the largest factory in the west is located.